The Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts
LATINOS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CALIFORNIA
National Register of Historic Places Context Statement
Preserve Latino History

Background

In 1988 the California Office of Historic Preservation published *Five Views*, a statewide survey of properties associated with ethnic communities in California; the chapter titles included: American Indians, Black Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Mexican Americans. The study was intended to be a tool for researchers, schools, government agencies, historic preservation organizations, and ethnic communities. In their foreword to the publication, Henry Agonia, Director of California State Parks, and Kathryn Gualtieri, State Historic Preservation Officer, said, “... it is important to remember that this report is only a beginning, one step in an ongoing process.” *Five Views* is significant because it was the first statewide survey of its type in the state and it raised public awareness.

Project Description

After a two-year collaborative process with representatives of California’s Latino communities, the Office of Historic Preservation in 2015 published *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, a historic context that recognizes the contributions of Latinos to the more recent history of California. *Five Views* was an early effort to make Californians and the nation aware of Latino history and some of the properties associated with that history. The objective of this current project is to update and expand the information provided twenty-five years ago, and nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The *Latinos in Twentieth Century California Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF)* provides the framework for the nomination of associated properties in the contexts of Making a Nation, Making a Life, Making a Living, and Making a Democracy. Properties address the themes of labor, economic justice, struggles for social and political inclusion, arts, politics, and media. They are representative of the geographic and regional divisions of the state, and attempt to balance the urban and rural legacies of Latinos in California.
Back in December of 2015 the Fresno City Council passed a resolution designating the Azteca Theater a Heritage Property to be placed on the Local Register of Historic Resources. That was the first step of the process for the Azteca to be placed on California’s list and be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. On March 27, 2017 the Azteca, as it is commonly known, was put on the Nation Register program for Latinos in the 20th Century.

The Azteca played a significant role in the development of Hispanic culture in Central California since its opening in 1948 by Gustavo Acosta as the main Spanish language theater in the San Joaquin Valley, screening both new releases from Mexican Cinema and musical concerts.

In 1956 the theater blossomed under the leadership of Arturo Tirado, who also hosted tours for famous celebrities and musical groups.
Lauded Latinx History

Pan-American Building in East Los Angeles added to National Register of Historic Places

By Antonio Pacheco • April 14, 2017 • Preservation, West
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